

# Secretary DeVos Applauds Consensus on Higher Education Reforms

*Comprehensive agreement by negotiators paves the way for overdue modernizations of accreditation, distance learning*

U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos welcomed news today that the committee debating her proposed “Accreditation and Innovation” higher education reforms reached consensus on the text of the draft rules. The package of higher education regulations is aimed at rethinking higher education to improve outcomes and accountability for students, institutions and taxpayers. The draft regulations, which will next be published for public comment, come after months of negotiated rulemaking that engaged a wide variety of higher education stakeholders.

“Today’s historic action proves just how much can be accomplished on behalf of students when we put their needs above all else,” said U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos. “Rethinking higher education required each person at the negotiating table to challenge assumptions and examine past practice in order to better serve students. I commend them for doing just that.

“The committee recognized that higher education has changed in many ways since the last reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, including in the use of innovative technologies. These changes will allow students to work at their own pace to earn a college degree, obtain credit for proving what they already know and earn a credential aligned with employers’ job requirements. The new policies and procedures will also work against unnecessary credential inflation that drives up cost and reduces the opportunity for low-income students to prepare for certain jobs.

“These much-needed reforms will promote competition and raise standards for our accreditors, ensure that teachers get the proper credit for service in high-need fields, restore respect for an institution’s mission, particularly faith-based institutions, put more teeth into teach-out plans and agreements to protect students from precipitous closures and engage employers more fully to ensure that the workforce elements of higher education align with employer needs.

“Everyone at the negotiating table -- students, employers, veterans, accreditors, financial aid administrators, student legal aid organizations, and minority-serving, faith-based, online, two-year and four-year, public, non-profit and proprietary colleges and universities -- overcame the naysayers to achieve consensus. I want to thank all of the negotiators and our entire team for their hard work and congratulate them on a job well done.”

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